

Communicating With Your Legislators

Research shows that elected officials pay more attention to personal communications from their constituents than to any other source. Writing letters, calling or visiting your representative are all effective ways of delivering your message. To help we offer the following suggestions:

Written Letters

Personal letters are the most effective form of communication.

- ✓ Identify by number and short title the bill about which you are writing.
- ✓ Keep your message short; one page if possible.
- ✓ Use your own stationary.
- ✓ Include a return address and both day and evening phone numbers.
- ✓ Avoid form letters.
- ✓ Address letters properly.

Letters to the Governor

The Honorable (full name)
Governor of Colorado
State Capitol
Denver, CO 80203
Dear Governor (last name)

Letters to a Senator

The Honorable (full name)
Colorado Senate
State Capitol
Denver, CO 80203
Dear Senator (last name)

Letters to a Representative

The Honorable (full name)
Colorado House of Representatives
State Capitol
Denver, CO 80203
Dear Representative (last name)

Telephone

Legislators do pay attention to phone calls. Many now have voice mail to make telephone communications more convenient. Telephones are particularly effective when issues are time sensitive. When you call:

- ✓ Identify yourself.
- ✓ Identify the bill about which you are calling.
- ✓ If you want a return phone call, leave both day and evening phone numbers.

Personal Visits

Personal visits are an effective way to convey your message.

- ✓ Don't visit without an appointment.
- ✓ Keep the visit brief.
- ✓ Afterward, send a brief note of thanks, and reiterate your position on the issue discussed.

Testify

- ✓ Identify yourself and entity you represent.
- ✓ Prepare written copies of your testimony.
- ✓ Be concise.
- ✓ Be prepared to answer questions about your testimony.

Other Methods

- ✓ Send telegrams.
- ✓ Write letters to the editor of your local newspaper.
- ✓ Respond to surveys sent by your legislators.

How do I address the legislators?

- ◆ "The Honorable" in the inside address.
- ◆ "Dear Mr/Ms" for the salutation.
- ◆ Communicate a clear vision.
- ◆ First step is to define your goal. Tell them what you wish to gain.
- ◆ Use concrete, specific language. Eliminate any information that does not directly contribute to your purpose.
- ◆ Connect new ideas to existing one therefore creating a new concept.
- ◆ If you have any research to support your issue, give a brief outline or include the research as an attachment.
- ◆ Emphasize and review the important points of your goal.
- ◆ Include where you can be reached – telephone number, address, or e-mail address.